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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord of creation, lead us through this day. Control our thoughts, words, and deeds as we serve as Your ambassadors. Show us the tasks that deserve our attention. Keep us from the wrong focus.

Continue to sustain the Members of this body. Answer their prayers; protect them from dangers; keep them faithful.

Help us all to remember that those who take refuge in You will never be put to shame.

Bless our military men and women. Be their light in darkness. In Your great mercy defend them from perils and dangers. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will begin with a 1-hour period for morning business. At 3 o'clock this

afternoon, we will start debate on H.R. 5411, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act. Chairman GREGG will be here to manage the bill, and we hope that Members will come forward to offer amendments today. We will not have any rollcall votes during today's session, although I encourage Members to come forward with their opening remarks. We need to finish this bill this week and, therefore, Senators should be ready as soon as possible if they intend to offer amendments. I again encourage Senators to contact the bill managers if they would like to offer amendments so these amendments can be scheduled for the appropriate time.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in Roll Call today, we learned that the Republican majority is going to attempt to finish earlier than we anticipated. In fact, the quote is that the majority leader and the majority whip have "scrapped plans to keep the Senate in session through the beginning of October, and will instead look to wrap up work on as many appropriations bills and other must pass measures before September 27."

This new adjournment date means the Senate has only 8 more weeks in which it will be in session, 40 business days. If we subtract Labor Day, that makes 39 days. If we subtract Mondays and Fridays—which seem to be what we subtract on a weekly basis—there are 23 legislative days left in the 109th Congress—23 days and so much to do.

For months, this what others have deemed the do-nothing Republican Congress has wasted time on issues such as the nuclear option, the mar-

riage amendment, drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge, flag burning, bankruptcy class action, and, of course, time and again, the estate tax repeal.

As a result, here we are with only a handful of weeks remaining—in fact, a handful of days, 23—to do so much and to address the priorities of the American people.

I had a wonderful week last week in Las Vegas, in Searchlight. I traveled the State. I spent it all in southern Nevada. The concerns I heard from my constituents are the same concerns this Republican Congress has been ignoring for the last 18 months.

For example, I traveled a few miles out of Las Vegas. Years ago it seemed as though it was a long way out of Las Vegas. From downtown Las Vegas, it is less than an hour to a place called Coyote Springs. It is partially in Lincoln County and partially in Clark County. We were there talking about a new development. At that place in the desert, they are going to build 159,000 new homes—159,000 new homes—creating half a million jobs. Those people who are going to be living in those homes and building those homes are concerned about the price of gasoline, as well they should be.

The price of gas this past week has gone up 11 cents a gallon. The average price now in Nevada is over \$3 a gallon, more than 50 cents a gallon than it was just a year ago. Families are pouring their savings into their gas tanks, but this Republican Congress has done nothing to help them—and I mean nothing.

While they have been quick to address nonissues that the far right wants—and these issues have no hope of passing—they spend valuable time on the Senate floor sending a message to their base, is what we are told.

For example, have we done anything about alternative energy? Nothing—nothing to harness the sun, the wind, geothermal.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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